



Hurricane Katrina Task Force Update

May 2007

City's Task Force Presents \$5,000 Donation to St. Bernard Parish Public Schools

In September 2005, the City of Falls Church established a Task Force to coordinate local efforts to aid those affected by Hurricane Katrina. The Task Force organized several fundraisers, including Mardi Gras Restaurant Week, school bake sales, a hygiene product collection drive, a backpack collection drive and a holiday gift card donation drive.

The Falls Church City Schools donated surplus classroom trailers, the George Mason Mustang Athletic Booster Club raised funds, as did the Mary Riley Styles Public Library. To date, a total of over \$155,000 in material and financial contributions have been donated, as well as 6,100 pounds of hygiene products and over 400 filled backpacks.

Although the Hurricane Katrina Task Force was officially decommissioned in September 2006, efforts to raise funds for St. Bernard Parish Public Schools have continued:

Change For Katrina

A fundraiser sponsored by Coinstar benefiting Habitat for Humanity's rebuilding efforts. Several containers were placed around City Hall, the Community Center and Library, raising a total of almost \$300.

City of Falls Churchopoly

A custom-made board game fundraiser that commemorates the City, its businesses, residents and history. Proceeds benefit St. Bernard Parish Public Schools.

In late April, Task Force member Tori McKinney presented St. Bernard Parish Public Schools with a check for \$5,000 to aid in the rebuilding of their school system. Progress has been slow, but the Parish is optimistic about the reopening of additional schools. See back for Parish Spring Newsletter.



Task Force member Tori McKinney presents \$5,000 check to Parish Superintendent of Schools Doris Voitier and her staff

upcoming Memorial Day Festival and Parade, the limited number of remaining games might not be around for long!

City of Falls Churchopoly board games can be purchased at the locations listed below. Please direct any questions to Adrienne Raines at (703) 248-5230 (TTY 711)* or araines@fallschurchva.gov.

Don't miss out—a limited number of City of Falls Churchopoly games remain!

Art & Frame of Falls Church
111 Park Avenue
(703) 534-4202

Beyond the Garden Gate
450 W. Broad Street
(703) 752-5226

Commissioner of Revenue
300 Park Avenue, 104A
(703) 248-5065*

News from St. Bernard Parish Public Schools

Thank You, Donors!

School is in session and we are delighted to be here!! As donors to our cause for this past year, you might be interested in our progress since Katrina.

On August 14 we opened two schools, Andrew Jackson Elementary and Chalmette High School. Our district enrollment is approximately 3500 students, about one-third of our pre-Katrina enrollment. Although the growth of our community is slow, our student count grows daily. We feel that this is a good sign for all of us.

On August 29 we hosted a Community Day of Reflection. Our program was filled with music and thoughts of the past year and how Katrina impacted our lives. Many officials from the United States Congress attended, as well as state and local officials. The program, which highlighted our children and those who helped us through this year's journey, was quite moving. National and State officials indicate that we are not forgotten and plan to help us.

This year's district theme is ***Rebuilding with Pride!*** This represents our district's plan of hope, of restoration, and of a bright future for our children. As we continue our reconstruction efforts, we will consider new ideas, new facilities, new connections with our local colleges, and we will make a firm commitment to our community to rebuild a premier school system. The measures to achieve these goals have been discussed and approved by our school board.

Under the leadership of Superintendent Doris Voitier and Assistant Superintendent Beverly Lawrason, we know that we will continue to move forward. We are committed to providing our students with the quality education that has become synonymous with St. Bernard Parish Public Schools.

In spite of our daily struggles, we are truly happy to be here! We know how fortunate we are to have had people like you help us along the way, for we would not have made it this far without each and every one of you.

Thank each of you for your caring and support. We will never forget the role you have played, and continue to play, in helping us along this journey of our recovery.

For a complete listing of donors, visit
<http://www.stbernard.k12.la.us/donors.asp>

Spring Newsletter—April 2007

Nineteen months have now passed since the entire Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coasts experienced the ravages of Katrina. Countless families are still struggling to paste together the pages of their lives into a new chapter, one that speaks of hope and better times ahead.

Nineteen months have faded into history as the St. Bernard Parish school district continues to move forward on the road to recovery. We now have three additional sites under renovation. These three sites will open on August 15th as Trist Middle School, Gauthier Elementary School and Rowley School for Alternative Programs. They will join Chalmette High School and Andrew Jackson Elementary, our two currently operating schools, to form a roster of five educational havens for our most precious possessions, the children who have returned to St. Bernard.

Our enrollment has now grown to approximately 3800 students including three-year-old preschoolers through 12th graders. This increased enrollment is certainly a reflection of the slow yet persistent return of residents to our community. Yet, we have a long way to go to recover the pre-Katrina enrollment of 8800 students and a community of 70,000 residents. With the help of mild hurricane seasons, more timely assistance from our state and federal governments, and people like you who have given us tremendous support and encouragement, we feel that full recovery can become a reality.

Doris Voitier, our superintendent, has received much recognition and many prestigious awards for her vision, leadership and courage in the face of enormous adversity while rebuilding a school system from nothing. In May, Doris will travel to Boston to receive the John F. Kennedy Profiles In Courage Award, thus joining the ranks of presidents and other world leaders who have demonstrated selfless resourcefulness and persistence to provide for the needs of others. Our school system and our community are tremendously proud of Doris and will be forever grateful for her accomplishments on our behalf.

We thank each and every one of you for the part that you have played in this rebuilding process. We could not have traveled as far as we have without the help of our wonderful friends throughout this nation and even in other nations. We will continue to keep you informed of our progress, as you have helped us put stone upon stone to become stronger and better.

From 9000 students, to 300 students, to 3000 students, this video takes you through the hardships in the shelter, the devastation of the storm, and the rebirth of a school system.

Watch the video at:
http://www.stbernard.k12.la.us/ourstory_home.asp